



# *the* **RARA RAG**

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NO. 6

## Antennas: You can't live with 'em, and you can't live without 'em!

By Frank Schramm, WB2PYD  
Vice-President, RARA

Sound like something else you know? Our guest presenter, Raj Dewan N2RD, may not have all the answers to your love life, but when it comes to antennas he's got Hugh Hefner beat hands down!

Whether you've been licensed for a month or millennia, at one time or another you have probably pulled out a few hairs trying to get RF from the back of your radio into the atmosphere where you hope someone else will retrieve it. The magical, mystical, mechanism required to meet that objective is: An antenna! Often referred to as an aerial by Mr. Gable, they come in a wide variety of sizes and shapes. They can be made with anything from scraps found around the house to the most exotic metals this side of the solar system. Is a beam really better than a dipole? What makes one antenna perform better than another? While we're at it: What is a dB, and how come sometimes you see it written as dBi?

- John just bought a nice house in the suburbs that came with lots of room, a few trees, a great view and a zoning board with cable cutters! What can he use for an antenna?

### **RaRa MEETING**

**February 1, 2008**

**7:30 P.M.**

Henrietta Fire Hall #1  
3129 East Henrietta Road

**Antennas, All you ever wanted to know!**

**By Raj Dewan, N2RD**

- Pete just dropped a good chunk of change on a nice shiny new vertical antenna, but no one past the end of his driveway can hear him. What gives?
- Every weekend Bill's neighbor pounds on his front door ranting about CW coming over his new multi giga-bucks home theater. Short of burning down the neighbor's house, what can Bill do?
- Louis got an awesome new Heil microphone from his XYL for the holidays. He's burning up the airwaves raving about it to anyone who will listen. The only complaint he has with it is it burns his lip every time he gets too close. Well Louis, that's not a new feature and it shouldn't happen. Want to know how to fix it?
- I know we have all seen this one: Did you ever wonder why the neighbor's kid runs around his yard in circles hitting his head when you key the mike? Well it's probably something in the water, but its kinda fun to watch!

The answers to these questions and more will be provided by our radiating expert Raj. We'll also discuss building homemade HF and UHF/VHF antennas including what to use and where to get it.

So I'll see you all on Friday, February 1st at the Henrietta Fire Station #1!

### **SILENT KEYS**

**Arthur K. Hamann, KB2FXY**

December 20, 2007

**Donald P. Nicols, W2DBS**

December 21, 2007

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## The Prez Sez

By Jim DiTucci, N2IXD  
 President, RARA

During the January 4<sup>th</sup> meeting, I mentioned that it was gratifying to see some new faces. In addition to new members and visitors present, some of our regular members brought friends. Welcome to RaRa! I hope that you will find that we have a very active club that promotes all that amateur radio has to offer. Thank you for joining us. Thank you to our members who thought enough of our club to bring and introduce a friend to RaRa.

I took a head count during the January meeting and came up with 86 people compared with 87 people who signed the attendance roster. Who did I miss? More importantly, 36 people provided a new or updated e-mail address. Your email address is important to us as we move towards a "soft-copy" email newsletter format in addition to the RaRa Rag that your postman delivers to your mailbox each month. We will be putting measures in place soon to make it easier for you to sign-in on the roster...perhaps a computer printout of recent meeting attendees sorted by last name with a check-box for you to fill in next to your name. Additional space will be provided for guests to sign-in or for you to notify us of changes to your contact information. It can't get any easier than that.

There were a few regular faces not in attendance. I hope it was because of a schedule conflict and not because of something we have done or have failed to do. If it was the latter, let us know so we can fix it. Your officers and directors gauge their job approval by your meeting attendance.

During the next several months we will be experimenting with different meeting formats. Our goals are: 1 - Keep the business meeting as short as possible (less than 30 min.) 2 - Provide more break time between the business meeting and the presentation. 3 - Start the presentation no later than 8:30 pm and wrap it up by 9:45 pm. Please be patient while we work the kinks out. Our desire is to give you more social time to spend chatting with your friends.

A thank you is in order to the handful of members who come to the meeting a few minutes early or stay a few minutes after the meeting to help set-up/break-down the chairs

and tables in the meeting hall. Usually it is the same crew. They would welcome a few minutes of your time now and then.

Elsewhere in the Rag this month is an article by Len, KC2PCD, asking for you to share your shack with us. It doesn't matter how elaborate or simple your shack is. It can be a closet, kitchen table, basement workbench or in your car. Don't have a shack yet? Borrow your friend's HT and have him snap a picture of you holding it. That's what we really want... your face. Len will add your first name and call sign to the picture and create a slide show of you and your RaRa friends to display on the presentation screen before the meeting starts and during the break. What better way to associate a call with a face, meet old-timers and welcome newcomers.

Your VP, Frank, WB2PYD, is in the process of appointing a nomination committee for next year's Officers and Directors. If you would like to help him contact potential candidates for office, or if you would like to run for office yourself, please contact him at the email address listed in the Contacts area of this copy of the RaRa Rag. In addition, we need your help for a variety of interests including Awards Chairman, Public Service Coordinator and backup/assistant for every active committee. You can see a list of those committees and the current committee head in the Contacts area of the Rag or on the RaRa website:

[http://www.rochesterham.org/rara\\_off.htm](http://www.rochesterham.org/rara_off.htm)

Here is your chance to get involved and make a difference in your club. And it's not too early to start thinking about the 74<sup>th</sup> annual Rochester Hamfest that will run on Friday, May 30 and Saturday, May 31. There are many important positions available leading up to the event and during the event that deserve your time and talent. Contact Dick, KG2I, for more arm-twisting... I mean information.

I hope to see you all on Friday, February 1. Come meet your friends at RaRa.

**March Rag Deadline  
February 6, 2008**

**Scholarship  
Application Deadline  
April 15, 2008**

## RaRa Rag 20 Years Ago, February, 1988

By Ed Gable, K2MP  
RARA Historian

The program for this meeting will be Rochester's own Art DeBruycker, W2YGW, *New York State Traffic Net* Assistant Manager, speaking on the National Traffic System. The meetings then were at the Forty and Eight Club at 8:00 p.m. Licensing Course Director Ed Gable, K2MP, announced that the 1988 Spring sessions were starting February 22<sup>nd</sup> at 111 Westfall Road. Thirteen sessions are planned with Dave, K2SQI, doing Advanced theory, Novice code and theory by Joe Phillips W2DHV, Bud Young WA2UGE keys the General class code and Ed Gable K2MP teaches Tech/General theory. Classes are \$20.00 for all materials and membership in RaRa.

Through the *International Sisters Cities* program RaRa is keeping schedules with sisters Krakow, Poland and Bamako, Mali. Thanks to Irv Goodman, AF2K and George Negus, K2OIU, for running the skeds. Citing needs for advanced membership tracking and hamfest needs, RaRa reported that it has acquired a second administration computer. The new PC, a Zenith IBM compatible, was made possible with donations from Heath Computer and Electronics, Dick Goslee, K2VCZ, William Gibson KB2CHD, Scott McCagg, Robert McMinn, Neal Eckhardt WB2EKP and Dave Bernheisel N2DPF.

The RaRa Board also announced in this issue that the club will participate in ARRL Field Day. Interested parties were urged to contact Lloyd Caves, WB2EFU. An announcement by AT&T received a cold shoulder by most Amateurs as they said any ham experiencing telephone interference with an AT&T telephone could order a Z-100A RFI filter, for \$17.95, using a convenient 1-800 number. Always making DX'ers happy was the addition of a new country as the Netherland Antilles became Aruba with the prefix P4.

With regret it was reported that Charles Cona, KA2HWB was reported a silent key. Advertising as "back in business" was Commercial Communications of Lancaster, New York. From the Want Ads you could buy a Kenwood TS-820S from Sax Ringler, W2SAW.

## Volunteers needed for New York Special Olympics!

By Keith Freeberg, N2BEL  
RARA Public Service Coordinator

Have you seen the 'Heart' these athletes have? With a daughter who participated in Special Olympics since she was tiny, I've had the opportunity to admire the sportsmanship, courage and determination of these athletes.

Now that they have need of Ham Radio help, you too can witness one of the upcoming Winter Games up close and personal. We need volunteers, lots of them, to help with the Alpine Skiing event in February. Why lots of volunteers? We want to ensure you get into the Ski Lodge often to warm up.

This all happens February 9<sup>th</sup> at Swain and is destined to be a day of smiles for volunteers and participants alike. It will be a day of helping followed by a gathering of the Hams at the home of WB2PYD for complimentary pizza and wings. (Thank you Frank for your generosity.)

You do not need to be a skier to help but, if you are, there may be a complimentary lift ticket in works for you. All you really need is an HT and a fully charged reliable battery to help. Sign up today! More information can be found on [www.RochesterHam.org](http://www.RochesterHam.org) on the Public Service page.

Call or email Keith Freeberg, N2BEL for more information or to sign up. [N2BEL@arrl.net](mailto:N2BEL@arrl.net) or 585-254-0722.

## A dollar and a dream

by Len Crellin, KC2PCD

You may have noticed in the Rag that we no longer have an Awards Chairperson. I know I miss the excitement of awaiting the calling of the numbers, and perhaps being the lucky person to walk up and pick up your prize. If you would like this tradition to continue, then why not volunteer yourself to become our next Awards Chairperson?

If you would like to go around and find some ham items at Hamfests, garage sales, auctions and such (and spend the club's money!) then this is the job for you! Selling the tickets and drawing the winners is all you need to do at the

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meetings. A little effort on your part will bring such joy to our winners. So what do you say? Step up and help to carry on a great RARA tradition! If interested, please contact any of our officers or directors and let them know. I've got a dollar just waiting to buy a ticket.

## Say Cheese!

by Len Crellin, KC2PCD

You may have noticed me taking photos at the meetings this year. Before I became a ham two years ago, I was a photo instructor for 35 years. I am trying to document all the activities that RARA has hosted. You may see some of them on the screen during the break at our meetings! I will also be helping to organize a photo archive on our soon to be "remodeled" web site. If you have any photos (old or new) of your shack, field day events, hamfests, mobile setups, towers and creative antenna solutions or any ham related activities...please forward them to me through my e-mail

[KC2PCD@rochester.rr.com](mailto:KC2PCD@rochester.rr.com)

Please include any captions that you would like to include to help me when I create the different albums. No camera? Let me know and I will come down to your shack and take a shot of you proudly displaying all your gear!( good to have for insurance purposes too). Thanks in advance for your cooperation and help with this new venture!

## New Column coming next month

Watch for a new column coming next month. It is called "Shorts & Sparks" by I. M. Zapped

## Feb. Calendar of Events

- 1 - RaRa General Meeting – 7:30 PM –  
HFC#1, 3129 East Henrietta Rd.
- 6 – RARA BOD Meeting – 5:00PM - RIT
- 8 - RVHFG – 7:30 PM, monthly meeting at  
Ogden Town Hall, 269 Ogden Center Rd.
- 12 - RDXA – 5:30 PM, Dinner, 7:30 Meeting  
NapaGino's Restaurant, 2200 Penfield Rd.  
Rtes 250 and 441
- 15 - RRRRA – 8:00 PM, Regular Meeting  
Pittsford Town Hall, downstairs room
- 16 - RaRa VE Testing session – 10:00AM  
Bldg-9, Room-3139 RIT Campus.

## HELP Wanted

By Frank Schramm, WB2PYD  
Vice-President, RARA

Are you a “people person”? Are you well organized? If you are and you enjoy good food, good fun, and socializing then we need you as our Public Service Coordinator (PSC). This position is the liaison between RaRa and the event coordinator. The PSC meets with event promoters to assess their communications needs and coordinates the vast resources of RaRa to aid those needs.

This is probably the most important and least acclaimed jobs in the RaRa organization. It is literally our face to the public. The position offers perks like being wined and dined by the event sponsors and promoters.

If you're interested please contact any BoD member listed in the front of this RAG. If you're not, and can recommend someone who may be, please let us know.

## Sidebands – Amateur Radio in the News

By Larry Wallnau, W2ZEY  
RARA Media Coordinator

**RCA Awards Banquet – Cronkite in Spotlight:** At the 98th annual Radio Club of America (RCA) banquet in New York City, Walter Cronkite, KB2GSD, ARRL Roanoke Division Director Dennis Bodson, PhD, PE, W4PWF, and Jack Belrose, PhD, VE2CV, were toasted and feted throughout the night. Bodson received the Sarnoff Citation, given to recognize significant contributions to the advancement of electronic communications. Barry Goldwater, K7UGA (SK), was the first recipient of the Sarnoff Citation in 1973. Both Cronkite and Belrose received the Armstrong Medal, the RCA's foremost achievement award and named for its first recipient, Major Edwin Armstrong. The keynote speech was given by Andy Rooney of television's "60 Minutes." Cronkite and Rooney both attended the latter part of cocktail reception that preceded the banquet. Cronkite sat in an elevated chair to greet RCA members and guests in a receiving line and Rooney sat at a small table where the occasional visitor might approach to offer greetings. “The focus was on Cronkite, who enjoyed shaking hands with his admirers and

exchanging a few words with them,” noted RCA Director-Elect Don Bishop, W0WO.

**Source:** *The ARRL Letter*.

### Is It Cycle 24 Yet? Are We Almost There?

According to Tad Cook, K7RA, the big story in January was the sighting of the first spot of sunspot Cycle 24. The sunspot has faded away, but a new spot was observed emerging near the solar equator, and it has the same polarity as the Cycle 24 spot last week. This is odd because the spots from the new cycle should emerge at high latitudes. News reports this week said Cycle 24 has begun, but actually Cycle 23 has not ended yet. Cycle 24 spots should gradually increase in number, while Cycle 23 spots fade away. Some time around solar minimum we should see the count of Cycle 24 spots equal, and then outnumber Cycle 23 spots. I believe that is really the start of the next cycle, when we begin to see more Cycle 24 spots emerging than Cycle 23 spots. **Source:** *The ARRL*

*Propagation Letter*

**Ice Storms Hit the Plains:** Ice storms swept across the Plains states the week of December 10<sup>th</sup> which left nearly 1 million homes and businesses without power. In Oklahoma alone, there were approximately 600,000 customers without power, with 250,000 households and businesses in Tulsa alone without power. Officials in Missouri, Kansas and Oklahoma had declared states of emergency. President Bush declared a federal emergency in Oklahoma on Tuesday, ordering government aid to supplement state and local efforts. Authorities said Tulsa and Oklahoma City each had more than 100 reports of fires since the storm began, mostly from tree limbs crashing into live power lines. ARRL Oklahoma District Emergency Coordinator Mark Conklin, N7XYO, said “Starting early Monday morning, Oklahoma ARES was activated to support local area hospitals, as only five of the area hospitals had power from the grid... ARES volunteers are providing communications for one hospital at this time, but the Oklahoma State University Medical Center and Tulsa Spine Hospital also requested assistance. ARES is also working with the local Medical Emergency Response Center and the Tulsa Area Emergency Management Agency.” **Source:** *The ARRL Letter*.

**Our Monroe ARES Quick to Respond:** A severe windstorm hit the Monroe County area January 9 causing downed trees and power

outages. If it did not wake you then you are a remarkably sound sleeper. Wind speeds in excess of 75 mph were clocked – equivalent to a Category 1 hurricane. As of this writing (January 11), thousands of RG&E customers were still without power. Red Cross Shelters were opened on January 9 and Monroe County ARES was activated to assist at shelters. ARES stood down the following afternoon. Many thanks to Jeff and the volunteers who staffed shelters.

**Wisconsin ARES Responds to Tornadoes:**

The following is a synopsis of a story posted by Alexander Voss, N9RGX, on January 9 on *The Journal Times* (Racine, WI) online community bulletin board. Local ARES operators were activated after an outbreak of tornadoes in Kenosha County which destroyed houses and knocked out power. The ARES volunteers began providing support communications for the agencies responding to the disaster. The Hams provided logistical communications at the two relief shelters which the Red Cross opened in Kenosha County. The Hams also operated a station at the Kenosha County Emergency Operation Center... [According to] Alex Voss N9RGX, Assistant Emergency Coordinator for the Racine County ARES, "Cell phones are not up to the task. When the teams deployed in the field need to call in their reports you don't want them fumbling with a cell phone. You can't have everyone calling the same phone number at once either. Having a dedicated person along who can radio the information back to the Red Cross is essential to get the time-valued information where it's needed fast."

**For Science Geeks Only:** It's true! Rope (and coax) really does tangle itself up when you're not looking! A recent *Science News* story <http://tinyurl.com/2rfl6m> tells the tale. No word on whether scientists have been able to tackle coils of hard-drawn copperweld yet. In case tinyurl does not work, the long URL is <http://www.sciencenews.org/articles/20071222/bob11.asp>.

P.S. I read and enjoyed the article – guess I'm a geek.

**RaRa Hotline  
NEW NUMBER  
(585) 671-2424  
24 Hours a Day**

**Sign Up for Propagation Forecasts by Email:**

The KN4LF Daily LF/MF/HF/6M Frequency Radiowave Propagation Forecast is now free. You can sign up by joining the ad free Braveheart opt-in email mailing list at <http://www.kn4lf.com/kn4lf6.htm>. You will receive an email update of conditions every 4 – 6 days. The forecast is also available via the website at <http://www.kn4lf.com/kn4lf6h.htm> every Thursday at 2200 UTC.

**FOR SALE:**

T-50H Aluma heavy duty crank up Tower, 50 feet tall, rated for 100 Mile winds and tilts to work on the antenna. Retail for \$2,500. Asking \$1,850. Detailed technical specs at <http://www.alumatower.com>.

Also, Yaesu G-1000SDX heavy duty antenna rotor. Retail for \$469 + S&H. Asking \$250. Buy both for \$1,995!!! You pick up.

Call (585) 746-5118, N2MLG.

**Rochester Hamfest  
May 30-31, 2008**

**RaRa Amateur Radio  
License Testing  
All Elements needed  
to complete a license class.  
3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of each  
Month, September – April**

**Registration – 10:00AM  
Testing – 10:15AM  
Room 3139, Building 9  
(Park in Lot J)  
Rochester Institute of Technology  
1 Lomb Memorial Drive  
Rochester, NY 14623**

**Contact Raj Dewan, N2RD  
to reserve space.  
Call (585) 703-4003 or e-mail  
[n2rd@arri.net](mailto:n2rd@arri.net)**